



Questions and answers: Translating and interpreting services for aged care

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This document contains questions and answers about the free aged care translation service and interpreting services, including answers to questions received as part of a webinar hosted by the Department of Health and Aged Care on 14 May 2024. Where appropriate, similar questions have been consolidated.

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Free aged care translation service

What organisations are eligible to use the free aged care translation service?

Approved providers of the following programs can use the translation service free of charge:

- Commonwealth Home Support Programme
- Home Care Packages (HCP)
- Residential aged care
- Short Term Restorative Care
- Respite care
- Transition Care Programme (TCP)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFAC)
- Multi-Purpose Services (MPS)
- Disability Support for Older Australians (formerly Continuity of Support program)
- A peak body such as the Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA), Council on the Ageing (COTA) or LGBTIQ+ Health Australia (LHA)
- A member of the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program
- Care Finders.

Check eligibility here: diversityagedcare.health.gov.au/eligibility-checklist

Can volunteers who work in aged care use the service?

Yes, volunteers working for any of the above-listed aged care providers can use the free translation service to translate documents or other materials that meet the eligibility criteria.

How does the free aged care translation service work?

To request a translation:

- Fill in the online translation request form here: diversityagedcare.health.gov.au/request-translation or call 1800 271 034.
- Translation specialists will then work with you to understand your requirements. Your materials will be translated and returned to you in the desired formats.

What languages are available via the free aged care translation service?

The service can help aged care providers produce materials on the care and services they provide in many languages other than English. The service can also produce 'Easy English' or 'Easy Read' translations. For more information on available languages call 1800 271 034 or enquire using the online form here: diversityagedcare.health.gov.au/contact-us

What materials can be translated via this service?

Any printed or digital (including photography and video) materials about Australian Government funded care services for older people and their families and carers.

There are 2 categories of eligible materials:

- New materials that need to be created. This service is only available where direct translation of an existing resource is not appropriate.
- Existing materials that need to be translated.

Eligible material is material that will assist care recipients to receive information about their aged care services and make informed decisions about their care, including:

- care plan templates (but not individualised plans)
- welcome brochures
- information about how the service provider establishes care plans with care recipients
- a home care agreement template (but not individualised home care agreements)
- service provider-specific audio/video information
- welcome material such as how an aged care service operates
- form templates such as registration, service agreement and feedback forms
- in-facility wayfinding signage to help people find rooms and activities
- non-personal documents, such as general information about medical services or care
- audio and video messages that help people understand or participate in an aged care service.

For more information about eligible materials, see: diversityagedcare.health.gov.au/eligibility-checklist

What cannot be translated via the free aged care translation service?

Materials that are produced by other agencies or businesses are protected by their copyright, so cannot be translated through this service unless requested directly by the owner. Also out of scope are promotional materials attracting new people to a specific aged care provider, frequently changing materials such as menus, and personal content of care plans.

Check eligibility here: diversityagedcare.health.gov.au/eligibility-checklist

Is the free aged care translation service certified by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)?

The service uses NAATI certified translators whenever possible. NAATI certified translators are not always available for some rare languages.

Can the service be used in an urgent situation? How long does it take to get translations done?

If you need something translated urgently, call 1800 271 034 to discuss your needs and we will work with you to find a solution.

The standard turnaround time depends on the complexity of the material being translated and the relative rareness of the languages. For example, a document under 1000 words being translated into Mandarin and Vietnamese that does not require a lot of design work will usually be ready in 7-10 days.

What translating services are available for regional and remote areas?

The free aged care translation service is available nationally, including in regional and remote areas.

Can providers request for Department of Health and Aged Care documents to be translated?

Yes. If there is a document that you think needs to be translated that doesn't appear to be, please contact the free aged care translation service and we will look into it for you:

diversityagedcare.health.gov.au/contact-us

One of the challenges with translating documents is knowing whether the information is correct. How do you ensure the quality of the translated material so that it is correct, contextual and culturally appropriate?

The translation service aims to ensure accurate and culturally appropriate translations by:

- developing detailed briefs for translators following a review of the English material to identify any phrases that may not translate easily or require additional context or nuance
- engaging two translators – the first to do the initial translation and the second to review for accuracy and meaning.

Words and phrases used can vary across different dialects, cultures and communities so sometimes a translation can be accurate but may not reflect the preference of a particular person or community. Hearing from community about these preferences will help the service to improve.

If you have concerns about the accuracy of a translation we are always grateful for feedback. To raise a concern please contact us: diversityagedcare.health.gov.au/contact-us

Are Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) client survey documents eligible for translation?

Yes, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria – that is, they are not personalised documents and the requesting organisation has developed the document themselves.

Check eligibility here: diversityagedcare.health.gov.au/eligibility-checklist

Are My Aged Care Home Support Assessment Summaries for clients eligible for translation?

No, personalised documents are not eligible for translation.

Is there a limit on the number of translations a provider can request?

Providers should attempt to make a single request for translations per year, and this may include multiple products. Additional translations within a calendar year will be considered case-by-case. Please call 1800 271 034 to discuss your specific situation.

Can individual client responses, such as a client feedback form, be translated?

No, personalised documents are not eligible for translation. However, providers can use TIS National interpreting services to communicate with older people about their care. For more information go to: health.gov.au/tis-aged-care-providers or see the TIS National questions and answers below.

TIS National for aged care

What organisations are eligible to use TIS National for aged care?

Organisations can access TIS National free of charge for aged care if they are registered with TIS National and an approved provider of:

- Commonwealth Home Support Programme
- Home Care Packages (HCP)
- Residential aged care
- Short Term Restorative Care
- Respite care
- Transition Care Programme (TCP)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFAC)
- Multi-Purpose Services (MPS)
- Disability Support for Older Australians (formerly Continuity of Support program)
- A peak body such as the Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA), Council on the Ageing (COTA) or LGBTIQ+ Health Australia (LHA)
- A member of the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program
- Care Finders.

See: health.gov.au/tis-aged-care-providers

Is registration required to use TIS National for aged care?

Yes.

How can the aged care sector access TIS National?

To use TIS National:

- Register for a TIS National client code online: tisonline.tisnational.gov.au/RegisterAgency
Organisations that provide aged care services through multiple different government programs will need a separate code for each one. For assistance call the TIS National Client Liaison Team on 1300 655 820 (9am–5pm, Monday–Friday AEST) or email tispromo@homeaffairs.gov.au

- Login to TIS Online to book an interpreting service: tisonline.tisnational.gov.au/Login. For more information about TIS Online, see: tisnational.gov.au/Our-services/How-TIS-National-works-for-agencies

If you need to use TIS National and you do not have a login or client code, contact the TIS National Client Liaison Team on 1300 655 820 (9am–5am, Monday–Friday AEST).

If you need to use TIS National urgently, call the TIS National Call Centre on 131 450 at any time, day or night, to access a phone interpreter immediately.

Can volunteers who work in aged care use the service?

Yes, volunteers working for any of the above-listed aged care providers can use TIS National, as long as they have their TIS National client code and authority from their organisation to access TIS National.

What services are provided by TIS National?

TIS National provides:

- Immediate phone interpreting, where you can call TIS National and speak to someone straight away
- Automated Telephone Interpreting Service (ATIS), where you can answer recorded questions to get directed to the help that you need
- Pre-booked phone interpreting, so that you can make an appointment and speak to them when you are ready
- On-site interpreting, where you can speak to an interpreter in person, instead of over the phone, if that's what you prefer
- Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), where you can book a video conference with an interpreter, anywhere in Australia.

These services can be used to help organisations meet their responsibilities as approved providers, including to:

- discuss care needs, services and preferences with the older person
- discuss fees and charges
- develop or review care documents, such as agreements, care plans and budgets
- support older people to exercise independence in their care and participate in social and cultural activities.

Can documents be translated through TIS National?

No, TIS National does not provide a translation service. Translation can be requested through the free aged care translation service: diversityagedcare.health.gov.au

Does TIS National use certified interpreters?

TIS National is guided by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) to ensure clients are provided with the highest credentialed interpreter available. Interpreters are bound by the AUSIT Code of Ethics. For more information go to: tisnational.gov.au/Interpreting-for-TIS-National/NAATI-credentials-explained

Can aged care providers book face-to-face/in-person interpreters? If so, how far in advance are bookings required?

Yes. Bookings for face-to-face interpreters can be made up to 90 days in advance. It is recommended that as much notice as possible be provided.

Can TIS interpreters attend assessments in-person in regional and remote areas? Phone interpreting is not always appropriate for clients who have hearing issues or cognitive impairments.

This depends on whether or not there is an interpreter available in the area. Providers could request an on-site booking first, and if an interpreter is not available then a video remote/pre-booked telephone request could be booked instead.

Can aged care providers arrange for a TIS National interpreter to join an older person visiting their GP?

The GP would need to book an interpreter through TIS National. Medical practitioners can access TIS National services for free when delivering services that attract a Medicare rebate in private practice. Nurses, reception and other practice support staff can also access TIS National when working with the registered medical practitioners. For more information about how medical practitioners can access TIS National services go to: tisnational.gov.au/en/Free-Interpreting-Service

Does TIS National offer audio-video as well as telephone-based audio?

Yes. TIS National offers Video Remote Interpreting (an interpreter via a video conference).

When conducting client initial assessments or re-assessments is it best practice or mandatory to have TIS National interpreters attend in-person, or would a phone interpreter be ok?

It is up to the aged care assessor and their client to decide whether a phone or in-person interpreter would be best. Video Remote Interpreting is also an option to consider.

Is Auslan provided via TIS National? If so, does this include sign language for other countries?

Auslan interpreting is not available through TIS National. Instead, aged care providers can access sign language interpreting and captioning services free of charge through Deaf Connect under the government's National Sign Language Program. This includes Auslan, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, American Sign Language, International Sign Language and Signed English. For information visit: health.gov.au/our-work/the-national-sign-language-program-nslp

Do you know how many/what percentage of people are using TIS National in certain areas, for example West Wimmera region?

We don't have local level data but are monitoring national uptake by rural/regional/remote status with the goal of ensuring equal access Australia wide.

Can Auslan interpreters for assessment be arranged for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) via the Regional Assessment Service (RAS)?

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and Assessment Manuals state that interpreters can be arranged through the National Sign Language Program so that Deaf people can participate fully in their interactions with aged care services.

The National Sign Language Program (NSLP) assists people aged 65 years and over (50 years and over for First Nations people) who are Deaf, Deafblind, or hard of hearing, who do not have a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan, to interact with aged care services and participate in social inclusion activities that enhance their life and support their independence. It also covers health and medical appointments that attract a Medicare rebate.

Free sign language interpreting and captioning services provided face-to-face or by video remote as well as live captioning services are available to support clients to engage with:

- social activities
- My Aged Care
- Regional Assessment Services
- Aged Care Assessment Teams
- in-home aged care service providers
- residential aged care service providers
- other organisations involved in the provision of Commonwealth funded aged care services.

Deaf people and aged care services can book an interpreter under NSLP through Deaf Connect by visiting health.gov.au/aged-care-sign-language-service, calling 1300 773 803 or emailing interpreting@deafconnect.org.au.

For more information visit: health.gov.au/our-work/the-national-sign-language-program-nslp and myagedcare.gov.au/accessible-all

If a care manager is bilingual and able to communicate with an older person in their language, is this appropriate or should a TIS National interpreter still be used?

This is a decision for the service provider and older person to consider. An interpreter through TIS National should always be offered, as they are qualified, experienced interpreters bound by the AUSIT Code of Ethics. However, where the case manager and client have an established relationship and speak the same language, the client may decide that a TIS National interpreter is not required.

General translating and interpreting questions

What are some of challenges when communicating about dementia? How can we work with interpreters to use language that helps to overcome stigma?

Research has highlighted some of the challenges when communicating about dementia and has found that interpreters are servicing increasing numbers of people with dementia, but have variable experience and knowledge about dementia.

Sometimes the word dementia itself and how directly it translates – ‘dementia/demented’ can get confused (in all communities, not just Culturally and Linguistically Diverse [CALD]), whereas focusing discussions on brain health can help ensure walls aren't put up immediately. When talking with care recipients via an interpreter, referring to brain health rather than dementia is a more strength-based than deficit-based approach. Using this strength-based approach is likely to be more effective for CALD communities.

Recognising the challenges interpreters might face, the Department of Health and Aged Care is funding the National Ageing Research Institute to undertake a national roll-out of the MINDSET training, which familiarises interpreters with all aspects of dementia and its impact on cognitive ability; explains the tools used to assess and diagnose dementia; and engages interpreters with effective interpreting strategies for cognitive assessments. More information on the MINDSET study and training is available here: nari.net.au/the-mindset-study

How can culturally and linguistically diverse home care recipients access the dementia and cognition supplement?

The dementia and cognition supplement is available to approved providers of Home Care Packages. For people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds a specific assessment tool is used called the Rowland Universal Dementia Assessment Scale (RUDAS):

- [RUDAS test form \(PDF, 24KB\)](#)
- [RUDAS administration and scoring guide \(PDF, 4.8MB\)](#)
- [Dementia and cognition supplement for home care](#)

Aged care providers lodge claims for the dementia and cognition supplement with Services Australia.

For more information, visit: health.gov.au/topics/aged-care/providing-aged-care-services/funding-for-aged-care-service-providers/dementia-and-cognition-supplement-for-home-care

Do you have any resources/training for case managers on how to work with an interpreter alongside older people receiving aged care?

There are many resources and training opportunities available for case managers on how to effectively work with interpreters alongside older people receiving aged care. The Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program offers comprehensive training free of charge, focusing on accessing language services and collaborating with interpreters and translators. This training is available both in-person and online, with additional resources provided to participants.

State and territory government health departments and aged care peak bodies also provide valuable resources. These resources are based on the experiences of programs they have managed and training they've developed, often in collaboration with the PICAC Alliance and language service providers. They are specifically designed to enhance the skills of case managers in facilitating effective communication through interpreters, ensuring that care is both responsive and culturally respectful.

To find the solution that best suits the needs of your organisation, contact the PICAC in your state or territory. More information and contact details can be found on the PICAC Alliance website: picacalliance.org/members